

“Making a Difference: How to Be a Fruitful Christian”

John 15:1-8

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How to be a fruitful Christian...

A. Embrace God’s pruning. (verse 1-2)

“Ought we then to be surprised that spiritual pruning will be required? When it happens, we need to submit humbly, trust the skill of the Gardener who prunes us with tenderness.”

Elisabeth Elliot, *A Path Through Suffering*,
Servant Publications, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1990, p. 37.

“But oh, the pain of that pruning process! No matter how thoroughly we understand its necessity, it comes hard to human flesh and blood.”

Elisabeth Elliot, *A Path Through Suffering*,
Servant Publications, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1990, p. 38.

B. Remain/abide in Christ. (verses 3-7)

“Believers are to *abide* or remain in Jesus, the Vine. The Greek word for ‘abide’ is spoken as a command. It also has an ongoing emphasis; that is, the command to ‘abide’ is not fulfilled in a single act. Abiding, for the disciples and for all believers today, means to make a constant, moment-by-moment decision to follow Christ. And we must not be passive—believers don’t just sit and ‘abide’ until they die. Instead, we must be active...”

Life Application Bible Commentary: John,
Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois, 1993, p. 308.

“...fruit-bearing is a byproduct. ‘Apart from me you can do nothing’ (15:5b). To be connected to the vine means that the life of Jesus is flowing through us, and this leads to fruitfulness. Fruitfulness will be the inevitable outcome of an interior spiritual life with Jesus (cf. Gal. 5:22-23).”

Gary M. Burge, *The NIV Application Commentary: John*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2000, p. 418.

“The essential idea of fruit is that it is the silent natural restful produce of our inner life.” *Andrew Murray*

Life Application Bible Commentary: John, Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois, 1993, p. 309.

C. Pray while remaining in Christ. (verses 7, 8, 16)

“In this passage and in 14:13-14, ‘asking God’ is connected with fruit bearing and doing greater things for God. When a believer abides in Christ and Christ’s words abide in him, that person’s prayers will be answered. This does not mean that all requests are granted—for the context suggests that the prayers should pertain to fruit bearing (either helping others believe, or showing more of the fruits of the Spirit in one’s life) and glorifying the Father. An essential part of being a disciple requires bearing fruit for the Lord. And in order to pray for results, a person must abide in Christ. For when we abide in him, our thoughts and desires conform to his, and we can pray ‘in his name’ (14:13), knowing that our requests please God. We can be assured then that whatever we ask will be done.”

Life Application Bible Commentary: John, Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois, 1993, p. 311.

Question to ponder: So what is the result of someone who is religious but doesn’t “remain in Christ”? (verse 6)

“...these burned branches refer to those professing to be Christians who, like Judas Iscariot, are not genuinely saved and therefore are judged. Judas, a disciple of Jesus, seemed like a branch, but he did not truly believe. Therefore, he was cut off; his fate was like that of a dead branch.”

Life Application Bible Commentary: John, Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois, 1993, p. 310.